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REPORT TO MEMBERS FROM

COUNCIL

JANUARY 1983

For circulation to Directors, Staff and Members.

1. CO-OPERATIVE LEADER'S EFFORTS PUBLICLY RECOGNISED

Congratulations to Eric Rowley, the hard-working Chairman of the Herd Improvement Organisation of Victoria, on the award of M.B.E. announced in the Queen's New Year's Honours List. The award was listed for services to the "Dairy Industry" and, knowing the amount of his personal time he devotes to travel, administration and promotion of the Co-operative concept in dairy support and community services, we join his many friends in sending our appreciation for his past efforts and good wishes for the future.

2. INCORPORATION OF THE FEDERATION

Formal application has been made to the Registrar of Co-operative Societies for registration of the Federation as an incorporated body under the terms of the Co-operation Act 1981. The Act provides for Co-operatives, other than societies registered under the Co-operation Act to become members of the Federation, subject to certification by the Registrar that they are "of a substantial Co-operative character". The Registrar required the Federation to satisfy him on this matter to enable certification to be granted. The January Council meeting considered the constitutions of such non Co-operative Society Federation members. The report has been submitted to the Registrar for his consideration of issue of relevant certificates to enable incorporation formalities to be concluded. Apart from this matter we are advised all other aspects of the application for registration of the Federation are in order.

3. 1983 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The January Council meeting set the date for this important function in our calendar as Tuesday, 9th August 1983, with a venue at the Yarra Room, Olympic Park. It is probable a social function will be held in the evening.

Council would welcome any requests from members for topics which they consider might be usefully discussed to ensure the programme is one that will meet the needs of members. Suggestions should be submitted to this office by 16th February to enable a report to be submitted to the February 1983 meeting of Council.

4. FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS DUTY LEGISLATION

Prior to the preparation of the draft bill relating to this new legislation, your Executive Officer attended a Government enquiry and made formal submissions relating to the proposed legislation and its possible effect on Co-operatives in Victoria. The case was made that Co-operative Societies are currently exempt from stamp duty on cheques and, therefore, the removal of this duty on all cheques would not be of any benefit to Co-operative Societies. However, the imposition of a charge from a Co-operative's bank passing on the duty payable by the bank on all deposits would present a new burden on Co-operative Societies in Victoria.

The legislation has been passed and Co-operatives, like other businesses, are required to accept this charge. The matter is being referred to the Co-operative Societies Advisory Council by your Federation representatives.

5. STUDY OF CO-OPERATIVES IN SCHOOLS

Applications are being invited to fill the position of Project Officer to undertake research and produce material for development of curriculum in schools to create a greater awareness and expertise on Co-operative business structures, development of Co-operatives, the concept of working as a group to create employment, development of practical Co-operative activity in education institutions.

The project is part of the T.A.F.E. Transition Programme developed from initiatives by your Federation.

6. CHANGES IN CO-OPERATIVE REPRESENTATION ON CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT FUNDING COMMITTEE

Following discussions by representatives of Co-operatives funded under the Programme, the Ministry of Employment and Training has agreed that Co-operative representation on the Funding Committee will comprise any 3 of the following 5 nominees:

Tony Gill	- Ballarat Employment Co-operative
Jack Cleary	- Frankston Motor Cycle Park
Ron Harper	- Hodja Educational Resource Co-operative
Jeff Langdon	- Goldfields Community Radio Co-operative
Andrea Philipp	- Open Channel Co-operative

In addition, Bill Rawlinson, Executive Officer of the Co-operative Federation of Victoria, continues as the Federation's representative on that committee.

7. CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Minister for Employment and Training is currently setting up machinery for a comprehensive evaluation of the Co-operative Development Programme up to date. This evaluation will be undertaken by an outside business consultant appointed by the Minister.

In addition, all concerned with the Programme are being asked to review their role and performance and submit proposals to enable an internal self-analysis to be co-ordinated for the benefit of participants and the Government.

8. USE BY RETAILERS OF "NO REFUND" AND SIMILAR SIGNS

We have received advice from the Trade Practices Commission relating to possible breaches of the Trade Practices Act by the display of signs which make an unqualified statement to the effect that refunds will not be given.

Under the Act consumers have a right to choose either a cash refund or exchange of goods in certain circumstances.

While a consumer may be willing to accept an exchange of goods the retailer cannot insist that the consumer must take any exchange or a credit note, nor can he insist that a consumer's only option is exchange or nothing. Consumers have a right to a refund of money if they wish, to enable them to buy a different product or to go to a different retailer. This right also applies if goods were bought at a "sale" price.

Members with any doubts on this matter should refer, in the first instance, to this office for further clarification.

9. CO-OPERATIVE FEFERATION OF AUSTRALIA

The next meeting of the Council of the national organisation will be held in Melbourne on 17th February 1983.